

Not so very long ago, a woman in San Francisco consulted a physician, and left his office

A SIMPLE ILLUSTRATION.

to go to a drug store, carrying three or four prescriptions; one of these was for "pepto-mangan (Gude)." She presented all of the other prescriptions to the clerk, but held up the one especially mentioned and asked him if it did not call for "pepto-mangan." He replied that it did. Upon this the lady in question put the prescription in her pocket-book and asked for a bottle of "Lydia Pinkham's compound," saying that if the physician thought one "patent medicine" was good, she thought another was better, and preferred to take that one of her own choosing. What an increased respect for that physician she must have had! How she must have exalted his learning and intelligence! And what a compliment he paid her—to rank her intelligence so high that she considered herself quite on a par with her physician, when it came to choosing which "patent medicine" she should take!

In times past, pharmacy was considered a highly respectable calling and the pharmacist was regarded as a professional man; he was a prototype of the present physician, as the barber was the predecessor of the surgeon. More recently the pharmacist, still regarded as the follower of a professional calling, was regarded as the ally of the physician. But does that relationship maintain at the present time? Is the individual who dispenses drugs to be regarded as a pharmacist, the follower of a profession, or as a druggist, one who merely buys and sells drugs as a purely commercial occupation, incidentally selling alcoholic, cocaine and morphine nostrums to whomsoever will buy, and refilling physicians' prescriptions just as often and just as indiscriminately as the public may desire and be prepared to pay for such potions? It seems to us that this druggist question is now no longer a theory, but has become a condition which necessitates serious consideration by the medical profession. Lay publications (*Collier's Weekly*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, etc.) have shown that most of the so-called "patent medicines" are either worthless frauds or are alcoholic, cocaine or morphine mixtures. To sell the former class to the deluded people is to participate in a direct fraud; to deal in the latter class of preparations is worse than a fraud, it is participation in a serious crime. We have reached the parting of the ways. Is it the purpose of the former ally of the physician to again become a professional pharmacist and cease from participation in fraud and crime, or is it the intention of the druggists to be merely commercial entities and share in the proceeds of defraud-

ing and debauching the public? What is to be the purpose of the various associations of retail druggists? Is it to stimulate professional pharmacy, or is it to boom the sale of any fraudulent or worthless nostrum for which the manufacturer will agree to fix and maintain a price sufficiently high, so that the retailer of the fraud may participate in the crime? It should be the duty of every county medical society in the United States to take this matter up with the local druggists (or pharmacists?) and demand some definite statement of their attitude.

Where is the freedom of the press? Practically every newspaper in this country has been bought by the alcoholic nostrum manufacturers and has signed advertising contracts with them which contain the following clauses:

1st. It is agreed in case any law or laws are enacted, either State or National, harmful to the interests of the (Nostrum Manufacturing Co.), that this contract may be cancelled by them from date of such enactment, and the insertions paid for pro rata with the contract price.

2d. It is agreed that the (Nostrum Manufacturing Co.) may cancel this contract pro rata in case advertisements are published in this paper in which their products are offered, with a view to substitution or other harmful motive; also, in case any matter otherwise detrimental to the (Nostrum Manufacturing Co.'s) interests is permitted to appear in the reading columns or elsewhere in this paper.

(See *Collier's Weekly*, Nov. 4, 1905.)

In the matter of the fees for life insurance examinations, we have to report progress since last month. We are now compiling information relating to every company doing business in this State, and hope in a short time to be able to place it before you. In the meantime, we know of two companies that have instructed their agents to pay the \$5 fee in this State when it is demanded, and under no circumstances to allow any trouble on this score to arise. It seems to be quite evident that it is only a matter of time when the minimum fee paid for a life insurance examination in California will be \$5; that is, *if the physicians of the State want it to be so*. It is all up to you. If you will insist upon this, and fight it out, you will certainly win. The medical directors of several companies have written us that, in their estimation \$5 is little enough to pay for the work done, and that a cheap examination is really worthless. Just use all your personal influence in diverting business from the cheap and careless companies to those which have enough thought for their policy holders to pay for a proper examination and pay a decent fee. Physicians have too long regarded themselves as impotent in the hands of these mighty corporations, and hence they have been paid but scant consideration.